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Volume 38

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2004

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Our 40th year of paddling fun
Please renew your membership NOW.

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Program - May 12, 2004

Sandy Truxillo will tell us about the Devils' River. Join us Wednesday night at the Red Cross Bldg on 59 near Kirby.

Renew your membership now!

We need your help. Please renew your membership

for a year of great events that we are planning for this, our 40th year anniversary celebration.

Renewal form at left in the contents list.

We need your correct email address!

Please send your current email address to Marilyn Peery now.

Email address: mpeery@ev1.net.

The Waterline is the monthly newsletter of the Houston Canoe Club, Inc. The Waterline is made possible by your dues and critically depends on member contributions. Please submit items (please do not embed photos in MS Word documents) to the Editor at the following address.

sherrib57@hotmail.com

Houston Canoe Club Officers and General Meeting Minutes

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Officers for 2004

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Change of Address

Submit change of address to Marilyn Peery.

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Marilyn Peery

4119 Mischire Rd.

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Waterline Submissions

General Meeting Minutes

March 10, 2004

These minutes have not been approved. Any changes or amendments will be posted in next month's issue of the Waterline.

John Ohrt, Commodore, welcomed members and visitors and introduced the officers.

Bruce Litton, with the assistance of Scott Coultas, gave an outstanding program about the history of Hidalgo Falls and its current ownership by the paddling community.

During trip discussion, Donna Grimes asked for assistance from club members for the Buffalo Bayou Regatta on May 1 and the Anything That Floats parade on May 8.

Ron Nunnelly made a motion that the club donate \$100 to TRPA for use at Hidalgo Falls, as a memorial to longtime member Wesley Liles, who died in March. The motion was seconded and approved. The hat was passed for additional donations, which came to \$115, for a total of \$215.

John talked about the club's 40th birthday reunion at Huntsville State Park on October 9 and 10.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Olden, Recorder

Submit content to the Newsletter Editor,
Sherri Blifford, by the 18th of the month.

Send electronic submissions to
sherrib57@hotmail.com.

Send snail mail submissions to
Sherri Blifford
8233 Kingsbrook Rd., #134
Houston, TX 77024

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The Bayou Didn't Beckon

by Sherri Blifford

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The annual Regatta, sponsored by the Buffalo Bayou Partnership, has been advertised as "the Bayou Beckons" recently. But this year it didn't. The rain started Friday night, pounding the waiting canoes until dawn. At what should have been the start of registration, the annual regatta was postponed to Sunday. By mid-afternoon a second round of thunderstorms had swollen the bayou to a whopping 4500 cfs.



Start Sign Submerged

Click on image to enlarge.

Photo by Sherri Blifford

On Sunday, the race had to be cancelled altogether. Yes, the rain finally stopped but it still was not safe for a whole fleet of paddlers to go rushing down the bayou. The safety boats had no time for a pre-run.

Experienced paddlers understood and agreed that the race should not be run. The less knowledgeable grumbled that it didn't look that bad. They didn't know the power of water with that kind of velocity.



Sesquicentennial Park

Click on image to enlarge.

Photo by Sherri Blifford

All the pictures shown here were taken late Saturday afternoon.



Woodway Launch Site

Click on image to enlarge.

Photo by Sherri Blifford



Wortham Center

[Click on image to enlarge.](#)

Photo by Sherri Blifford



Shepherd Street

[Click on image to enlarge.](#)

Photo by Sherri Blifford



Allen's Landing

[Click on image to enlarge.](#)

Photo by Sherri Blifford

Buffalo Bayou, dissecting Houston, is fed by a series of tributaries. To some extent the flow can be controlled by releases from Addicks-Barker Dam to avoid flooding. After the rains subside, the gates are opened at certain levels to alleviate the situation before the next round of showers. Even with the gates closed, the tributaries are still flowing, adding water to the bayou.



Buffalo Bayou Confluence with White Oak at Allen's Landing

Click on image to enlarge.

Photo by Sherri Blifford

At Allen's Landing, White Oak Bayou converges with Buffalo Bayou with incredible force.



Flooding water carries debris that collects like this, forming a dangerous trap for novice paddlers

Click on image to enlarge.

Photo by Sherri Blifford

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Houston's Native American Experience

by Louis F. Aulbach

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Looking up from the water as you paddle under the concrete overpass for Interstate 45 and the various ramps for Memorial Drive during the annual Bayou Regatta, it is easy to be awed by the monumental structures and towering buildings of Houston's downtown. In May, 1837, the local newspaper reported a similar state of wonderment among the native Americans who were witnessing a building boom of the kind they had never before seen. The place where they had only recently hunted prairie deer and buffalo was being transformed by a large gathering of 'Europeans' into the capitol of the new republic.



Wortham Center (right) stands near the site of the 1837 Comanche camp site north of the Prairie Avenue gully and the Smith Street spring. Bayou channelization in the 1920's has removed the gully.

The first Congress of the Republic of Texas convened in Houston in the spring of 1837 and began meeting in the partially completed Capitol Building at Main Street and Texas Avenue. Many issues of great significance had to be resolved in the first years of the republic. It was not surprising, then, that constituents of all types converged on the town to lobby for their causes. The native Americans who lived in Texas were not ignorant of this. Reports of the presence of Indians, as the native Americans were called then and now, in Houston during the first five years of an independent Texas were common. In what surely must have been a dramatic situation, about three hundred Comanches arrived in Houston hoping to make a treaty with the Texas government. Considering that the population of Houston at the time was no more than a fifteen hundred or so, such a large contingent of Comanches caused quite a stir.

The Comanches set up camp in an area generally bounded by Travis Street, Buffalo Bayou, Prairie Avenue and Congress Avenue on the western edge of the developing town. Shortly thereafter, a group of Lipans joined the Comanches and they camped near the home of Mary J. Briscoe on the corner of Main Street and Prairie Avenue. The riparian woodlands of the bayou banks gave way to the tall grass prairie near the southern edge of town (hence the name Prairie Avenue). A gully, which began near Milam Street, ran west between Texas Avenue and Prairie Avenue to the bayou. At the point where it crossed Smith Street, near the front door of the Wortham Center today,

there was a large spring which had minnows and a large, overhanging oak tree. It was a good place to set up a temporary home as those of us who have done some wilderness expeditions of our own know.

Mary Briscoe, however, had a different feeling about those camped in sight of her back door. Her observations of the Comanches were of a filthy and forbidding looking group whose drunken orgies at night kept the ladies of town in at night out of apprehension. She felt that the Lipans, on the other hand, were "finer looking" than the Comanches and more "cleanly" in their habits, yet she felt "their presence was particularly obnoxious to me."

In spite of the condescending and often hostile attitude of many of the inhabitants of Houston toward the tribes, many persons in Texas, including President Sam Houston, took the matter of how to settle the concerns expressed by the Indians seriously.

Houston held peace talks with the tribal chiefs among a grove of pecan trees located in what is now the Theater District. A descendant of these pecan trees was exposed when the Rice Hotel Garage at Milam Street and Prairie Avenue was demolished in 2001.

In November, 1837, the Cherokee chief Duwali, the emissary of the Texas Republic to the Comanches, arrived in Houston to negotiate a treaty for his organization which was formally known as the Cherokee and Associated Bands. Chief Duwali, often called Chief Bowles by the Anglos because his name in Cherokee means "the bowl," had brought his band of Cherokees to Texas in the early 1820's, at about the same time that Moses Austin was establishing his colony for the settlement of Anglos in Texas.

By the time of the Texas Revolution, the Cherokee and about a dozen remnant tribes had obtained squatters' rights to land from the Spanish authorities in East Texas near modern day Tyler. The provisional government of Texas promised the land to these tribes for their neutrality during the revolution and, on February 23, 1836, they signed a treaty with Sam Houston. After the victory at San Jacinto and the Republic was becoming a reality, the treaty with the Cherokee and Associated Bands was tabled by the Texas Senate on December 29, 1836. In a blow to the hopes of Chief Duwali and his people, the treaty that had been negotiated and signed by Sam Houston was declared null and void by the Texas Senate on December 16, 1837.

Throughout the second year of his term as president, Sam Houston continued to seek a reasonable resolution to the Indian issue. John Torrey and his brothers came to Houston in 1838 and built the first frame building in town on Preston Avenue as a trading house for Indians as a part of Houston's policy and plan to secure peace with the Indians.

Tribal summit meetings continued during the spring of 1838. Representatives of several tribes held formal negotiations in the capitol with the President and Vice President.

On March 6, 1838, the Lipan chief Castro met with Vice President Mirabeau B. Lamar in Houston. Castro and a group of Lipans, who lived along the Rio Grande in South Texas, sought to negotiate a treaty. While in town, the government held a ball in which the Lipans were honored guests.

Several members of the Tonkawa tribe, who inhabited the Hill Country and areas of the Edwards Plateau, visited Houston on April 6, 1838. They left the city on April 10 after being presented gifts by President Houston.

Duwali, the Cherokee chief, arrived in Houston on May 1, 1838 and was treated with the utmost diplomacy. He accompanied the president, the vice president and members of Congress on a trip aboard the steamer 'Friend' to Galveston to inspect the naval garrison and the brig of war 'Potomac'.

Yet, in spite of all of the diplomatic efforts on behalf of President Houston, no treaty was concluded with any of the tribes living in Texas. Houston's term ended in late 1838, and Mirabeau Bonaparte Lamar, who took office in December, immediately announced his intention to rid Texas of "the Cherokee menace." President Lamar, earlier in his career, had been a major factor in the removal of the Cherokees from Georgia and was well known to have a long abiding dislike of Indians. Seizing the moment and the popular anti-Indian sentiment of the time, on May 26, 1839, Lamar issued a letter to Chief Duwali stating "...my duty as Chief Magistrate of this Republic, to tell you...that the Cherokee will never be permitted to establish a permanent and independent jurisdiction

within the inhabited limits of the Government."

The change in the administration reversed Sam Houston's policy of accommodation and assimilation of the native Americans into Texas society to Lamar's policy of eradication and removal. In one of the ironies of history that only political expediency can produce, President Lamar set his attack, not on the bellicose tribes of the plains who hunted and raided the fringes of the frontier, but the brunt of his policy was directed at the Cherokees who were among the most civilized of any tribe in Texas or the United States. The Cherokees were farmers and livestock raisers who wore European style clothes and lived in log cabins. The Cherokee had the misfortune of living on land that the Anglo Texans coveted.

In the summer of 1839, at President Lamar's order, Kelsey H. Douglass commanded approximately 500 troops of the Texas Cavalry who were to remove the Cherokee and Associated Bands to the Indian Territory. On July 16, 1839, a scouting party under James Carter engaged the Cherokee farmers, led by their 83-year-old chief Duwali, near the headwaters of the Neches River.

After thirty minutes of fighting, over a hundred Cherokee men were killed. Chief Duwali, mounted on his sorrel horse, holding a cherished sword given to him by Sam Houston, and wearing an old black military hat on his head, signaled the retreat. As the Cherokee were leaving the field of battle, Duwali's horse was shot out from under him. Rising slowly, the chief began walking away when he was shot in the back by Henry Conner. Chief Duwali sat down, crossing his legs and arms facing the militia. Captain Smith of the militia walked over to the chief, placed a pistol to his head and shot him to death. Cavalry members stripped skin from his arms for souvenirs and they left him there without burial.

The remaining Cherokees moved to the Indian Territory of modern Oklahoma where today there is a large tribal center in the town of Tahlequah.

Sam Houston denounced the death of Duwali, Chief Bowles, and, in a speech before the Texas assembly in 1840, declared that Duwali was "a better man than his murderers." In 1841, Houston began his second term as president and instituted a new Indian policy. Treaties were made with the remaining Cherokee and remnant tribes in Texas in 1843 and 1844, providing a reservation for the Alabama and Coushatta tribes near present day Jasper.

But, by this time, President Lamar had moved the capitol of Texas to the village of Austin and the town of Houston was suffering a serious period of decline. The native Americans who showed up in town were a destitute lot with none of their previous nobility. The Indian wars on the frontier of Texas would rage for another 40 years. One final ironic footnote: What is the mascot of the Mirabeau B. Lamar High School in Houston?

The Redskins.

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Medina Cleanup

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The river clean up is back on, hope to see all of you there.

I have Section 5 this year and you are welcome to join us or any of the other groups going to the clean up.

If you are interested in cleaning/paddling section 5, contact me at

jackborns@yahoo.com

or 281-485-2905 and let me know.

See you on the river.

Jack Borns

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Paul Woodcock with First Place Winner "Hot rod Lincoln" built by his Eastwood Academy students Randy Green and Miguiel Villanueva
Click on image to enlarge.



Donna Grimes works on her People's Choice Award-Winning Red Hat Society Float before the parade

For Sale/Wanted

Swap Meet in June

Come to the June meeting with camping/paddling items to swap for our annual swap meet.

Trade Old Town Discovery 17-4 canoe

Want to trade Old Towne Discovery 17-4 canoe for lighter 14' canoe.

My canoe has been in the water no more that five times and has been upside down in the garage since I got it.

Like-new condition.

Email tom@davisalliance.com or call 281-893-2291.

Two Kayaks for sale

Necky Alsek (14'6") rotomolded plastic, aqua green color, in excellent condition, has a rudder and rear hatch.

\$800 or best offer.

Perception Captiva (17') rotomolded plastic, royal blue color, in excellent condition, has a rudder and front and rear hatches.

\$800 or best offer.

Both kayaks are in great condition and are about two years old. They have only been used in freshwater lakes until moving to Houston last fall. We have been busy and haven't used them very much (4-5 trips a year). We will be moving across the country in June and can't afford to take them with us.

We live in Houston and store the kayaks at Clear Lake. If you would like more information, please e-mail me at

naomic@wsu.edu. br>

Thule Racks

Thule Racks. I have Kayak Loop and Bike holder.

Bought new in 1995. best offer. Email:

ewindus@ev1.net

New Members

Frank Ohrt

Robert and Greta Langley
rlangley2@houston.rr.com

John and Otillia Wargo

jmwargo@aol.com

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